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ABSTRACT

The paper is a report of research conducted on the question of acculturation and identity among Maori college graduates in New Zealand. Situational approach and role analysis were employed as the instruments with the sample of graduates from Maori University. The study concluded that the Maori is able to avoid assimilation into the dominant culture by adopting a behavior and identity best described as biculturalism. A caveat is given that the Maori situation cannot be equated with the Black or Indian in America. (Author/CWB)

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EDUCATION AND IDENTITY: A RECONSIDERATION OF SOME MODELS OF ACCULTURATION AND IDENTITY

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What precisely is New Zealand's policy for the future of the Maori race? The answer is elusive because nowhere is it defined .... Remiss as this may seem, it is probably deliberate and wise. It recognizes that evolution will take its course and pay scant attention to statutory formulas .... Evolution governs policy, not vice versa .... Evolution is clearly integrating (our italics) Maori and Pakeha /Europeans/. (Hunn 1961:14-15)

When one reviews the policy alternatives concerning the Maori of New Zealand, two facts become immediately apparent: 1) New Zealand, being a small, rather isolated country, is affected by outside opinion and 2), whether derived locally or through importation, does make use of anthropological research results. For example, it is not uncommon in government reports about Maori(s) to get references to "these inevitable laws of acculturation" (Hunn 1961:15), based ostensibly, though often obliquely, on anthropological studies.

It is to such models of acculturation that we must turn for a better understanding of the present government attitudes toward Maori(s).

Models vs. Reality

A research model provides a body of propositions (and often as well hidden assumptions) which map out a problem area and provide a logical framework for its description and eventual analysis. A model, of course, is not an adequate substitute for one's theoretical formulation and, hence, is normally preliminary, tentative, and not even fully descriptive. Whereas theory offers at

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least a proposed explanation, a model does not - in fact, cannot explain how a system works. Even when used as a testing device, a model yields only a preliminary pattern for representing something not yet fully described.

Bearing this in mind, we may summarize our major points: 1) A model is only an ideational replica of reality; it is not the reality itself. 2) Models do have an effect on the interpretation of research results. 3) These results, in turn, affect policy-making, directly or indirectly; and, hence, a careful examination of the model (and its implications) seems in order.

Sample Model 1: Equilibrium, Continuum Model

New Zealand offers a rather neat laboratory for the investigation of acculturation and identity, especially since research models in this area have been so consistently homogeneous and easy to delineate. Previous researchers, with few exceptions,[1] in studying Maori acculturation have most often utilized an equilibrium model of society and a unidimensional continuum model of change. These authors[2] have viewed change along a gradient, "from aboriginal Maori culture at one end of the continuum to contemporary New Zealand culture at the other" (Metge and Campbell 1958:358). These two polar "cultures" are assumed to be equally weighted and are viewed largely as static entities.

James Ritchie, the only scholar in New Zealand to have dealt directly with acculturation and identity, further has tried to measure "Maoriness" in terms of the survival of belief and behavior derived from pre-European Maori culture. His "measurement," what he called the "Maori Index" (Ritchie 1956:39), follows the acculturation gradient hypothesis made familiar by George Spindler (1955:118)[3] and, hence, stands or falls on its theoretical soundness.[4]

For a more complete criticism of the weaknesses of Ritchie's Index, see the excellent review article by Metge and Campbell (1958:352-386). Metge claims that such a scale is heavily skewed in favor of a romantic, pre-European "Maori" rather than dealing squarely with contemporary realities, i.e., modern Maoris. The notion of culture is static to an extreme (polar cultures assumed). And the idea of a continuum (with the resulting conclusion that there are inevitable "stages" - even laws - of acculturation) most certainly developed from the assumptions of an "integrated cultural whole" and an equilibrium model of society. Our research suggests that, in light of the complexity of the New Zealand social structure, such models of change are highly problematical.

Policy Results of Model 1

To conceive of Maori culture as a conglomerate of pre-European cultural survivals, or to look at Maoris only through European (Pakeha) institutions, leads to an interpretation of change as a simple replacement mechanism, i.e., change is interpreted almost exclusively as a "movement towards Pakeha culture" (Metge and Campbell 1958:359). At best the source of change is viewed as something disruptive. The element of individual choice, in any case, is held minimal or is absent altogether. In brief, the conclusion is that Maori culture is "attenuated" (Beaglehole and Ritchie 1958:151); or, more bluntly, there is assumed to be no Maori culture at all.

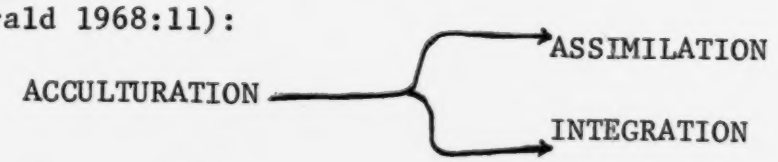
When the concept of acculturation is seen as a unilinear, irreversible social process, it is at best misleading. Hence, it is our contention that research models as those described above - whether intended as such or not - are often interpreted by government officials as open license for the destruction of the aboriginal culture (deculturation?), to be followed by complete cultural assimilation. Unfortunately, all this is carried out in the name of "integration."

Generally, the greater population of Europeans in New Zealand and the Government equate Maori culture with either "arts and crafts" or else some nebulous concept of "race." The first error leads to a denial of a modern Maori culture (even a subculture). The second misconception is more serious because the Government, in its defensive position in face of world opinion, feels it will encourage a "racial" situation if it recognizes any cultural realities. In order to avoid this perceived racial threat, the Government has recently passed legislations that undermine Maori cultural values and, hence, the subculture itself. (Cf. Maori Land Bill, the adoption law, the Maori language issue, and especially the decision to terminate the Maori schools - against Maori wishes!).

If "race" is taken to have some biological (biogenetic) meaning, there is at present no "racial" situation, as a group phenomenon, in New Zealand, except that created by the violation of individual dignities in achieving cultural integrity. Of more pertinence to our argument, what is really significant is that Maori opinion on these matters has been largely ignored in favor of the Government's homemade notions of these inevitable evolutionary "laws of acculturation" (Maori Synod 1961:8).

Because of the government equation of "integration" with assimilation, the Maoris naturally suspect the latter. One informant phrased the fear as follows: "Integration means the big fish swallowing the little fish."

Acculturation, however, refers only to changes that take place within and between two or more cultures in contact, without necessarily implying anything about the direction or the outcome of this change. Assimilation and integration, then, refer to two different end-results of the acculturative process (Fitzgerald 1968:11):



Though there may be some "stages" of acculturation specific to individual situations (Cf. reservation-acculturation model of American Indians), it seems unwise to imply that any one outcome is inevitable or even desirable.

Maoris have always resisted cultural assimilation, but, Ausubel notwithstanding, there is little evidence to suggest that they have resisted acculturation per se.[5] Being a proud people who value cultural integrity, the Maori have not succumbed to the European attitude that "education" and "acculturation" - meaning a one-way process of cultural assimilation - must be their eventual salvation. Rather, they have managed to adopt and adapt much of the European cultural tradition while retaining what is still valuable in the Maori tradition (Williams 1963:20).

Acculturation, then, must not be confused with assimilation. Cultural integration, at least in theory, still remains a possibility in New Zealand.

A Case Study of the Maori University Graduate: Introduction

We have seen how particular models can affect one's research conclusions; and how, in turn, policy is influenced by the assumptions played out, implicitly or explicitly, in such research schemes.

In our study of the Maori University Graduate (Fitzgerald 1970a), we uncovered conditions that could not be adequately handled with the conventional models of homogeneous, equilibrium societies.

Instead of focusing on culture per se, we emphasized the dynamic nature of "situation" and situational adjustment (largely following W. I. Thomas /Volkart 1951/). Role analysis, in an essentially biographical context, was the major analytical tool for determining which behavioral patterns were associated with which situations.

Since our primary interests were acculturation and identity, one of the focal questions of our research was what happens to Maori graduates who become educated by Western standards and, at least physically, move some

distance from their traditional and/or tribal areas?

The Socio-cultural Perspective: A "Levels" Approach

In an analysis of the cultural situation in New Zealand, two facts immediately suggest themselves: 1) New Zealand is a culturally heterogeneous society and 2) Maoris most often undergo a subcultural socialization. Rather than viewing the contemporary New Zealand social structure in terms of the juxtaposition of two discrete cultures, Maori and Pakeha, we had to shift our focus to the total New Zealand society, of which the Maori constitute only a micro-segment (what we call the micro-culture).

Maori and Europeans share a common culture (the larger New Zealand culture, called here, the macro-culture) as transmitted by the mass media, in schools, and through most other social institutions; yet, Maoris retain separate channels of communication that are played out in the Maori subculture.

Because the New Zealand educational system takes little responsibility for transmitting the minority tradition, the Maoris must learn about this subculture in specific, informal group situations, e.g., at hui (Maori gatherings), tangi (funerals), weddings, parties, and generally in an extended family context.[6]

Therefore, the Maori clearly do not constitute an "integrated culture whole." Rather, they represent an ethnic minority which shares the same basic institutions as the larger society while preserving its own distinctive styles - sometimes social, in the form of parallel ethnic institutions, e.g., the Maori Council, Maori church services, and, until recently, Maori schools; but most often the distinctions are cultural in origin and content.

If socialization is viewed as role learning, its content must necessarily differ in a bicultural setting. Using the older, more static conception of culture and society, each socialized individual could be seen as "a society in miniature" (Volkart 1951:132). More complex societies surely call for a

different analysis. For example, Maoris undergo a dual acculturation; they are socialized not only into the general New Zealand culture but also into the Maori subculture. Behavior, then, becomes a function of both the macro - and micro-cultural experiences. This fact complicates the analysis, because it is possible for individuals to utilize the norms of one culture while participating in another.

The major conclusion is simply this: New Zealand cannot be characterized culturally in terms of a Maori vs. a Pakeha culture on an imaginary acculturative continuum. Such a model is too simplistic. The possibility of subcultural patterning seems to have been long overshadowed by the assumed actuality of this unicultural model. The New Zealand social structure is obviously more complex.

Sample Model 2: A Situational Approach

Our theoretical model is largely a situational approach. We hypothesized that cultural orientation and identification among Maori graduates, to some extent, operates selectively depending on the factor of "situation," e.g., setting, interaction, and expectation,[7] rather than any arbitrarily selected culture traits or "degrees of acculturation."

Acculturation, thus viewed, is not a simple unilineal process of change from a Maori to a Pakeha affiliation on a socio-economic continuum. The process is more complex; the direction of change can be reversed in any acculturative stage by X number of situational factors. The element of individual choice, then, becomes highly significant in such acculturative settings. Identity, too, must involve such a complicated process of decision-making in face of multiple social and cultural situations.

We postulated that the social structure must regulate, to a large extent, which aspects of these "cultures" the individual will be exposed to and, hence, ultimately learn. We borrowed an idea from Simmel's model of cultural

levels (1955:127-195), which enabled us to conceive of the numerous combinations and degrees of participation in different cultural spheres; at the same time, avoiding some of the dangers of over-simplification which are characteristic of the traditional holistic approach. We represent the New Zealand social structure as follows:

NEW ZEALAND SOCIAL STRUCTURE

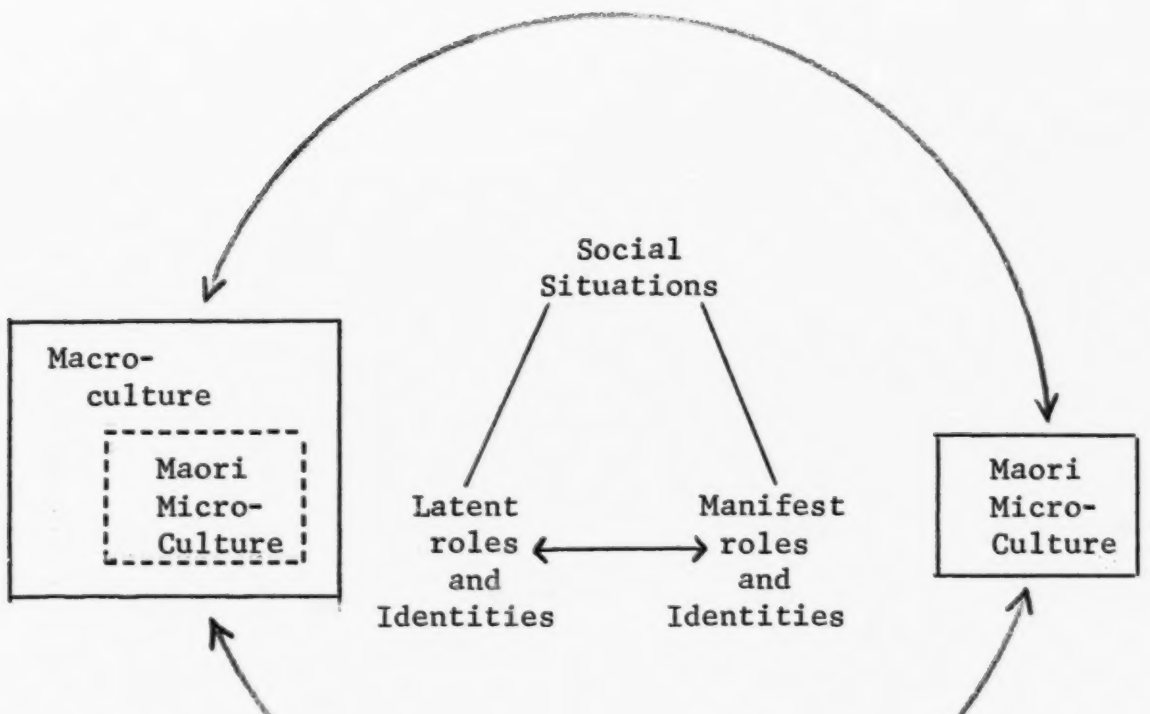


Figure 1: Sample Model 2

Maori culture is here represented as part of an ongoing complex, adaptive social system, composed of several cultural dimensions and different levels of organization.

At the macro-cultural level, the distinction between Maori and Pakeha was found to be sometimes neither socially nor culturally relevant, inasmuch as most Maoris (and especially graduates) have been effectively socialized into the New Zealand national culture and, therefore, can act out social roles in this cultural sphere with no special difficulties.

The reality is one which might be termed "cultural compartmentalization." The micro-culture, for example, is manifested only in specific contexts (e.g., at hui). In our study we observed that many Maori graduates had compartmentalized lives, shifting from one perspective to another as they participated in a succession of transactions not of necessity even related. In each cultural sphere they played different roles and manifested facets of their personality for different audiences. Our model, then, stresses the individual's flexibility and creative capacity to "shuttle between two cultures" (Van den Berghe 1967:134) or cultural levels, rather than overemphasizing unidirectional borrowing of cultural items as the major process of culture change.

Following Gouldner (1957-58:281-360) we distinguish between those social roles and identities which the group regards as relevant in a given situation and those which are defined as "being irrelevant, inappropriate to consider, or illegitimate to take into account in the same context." The latter are latent as distinguished from manifest roles and/or identities. The concept of "latent" roles[8] and identities allows us to proceed without focusing solely on the relatively visible and culturally manifest aspects of the socio-cultural system. With the graduate group this distinction is especially useful, for the Maori graduate is often oriented to his own latent identities, even

when a majority of situations claim his manifest behavior. Certainly one cannot overlook the importance of the Maori tradition for this so-called "elite acculturated" group. The historically rooted subculture, even when very latently perceived, often has profound significance for these individuals and for the group as a whole. In fact, in situations of "maximum free choice," to use Nash's terminology (1958:337), we witnessed a most interesting trend: Maori graduates manifested what might aptly be termed backward acculturation, i.e., the most acculturated individuals in the European sense often turn out to be the most traditional in a Maori sense.

Since any Maori lives in a kind of duplex culture, he may have a number of reference relationships which are relevant for him simultaneously, alternatively, or most often, situationally.

Turner (1956:328) has made a distinction between reference relationships involving 1) the source of an individual's major perspectives and values and 2) points of reference which merely take account of, without actually identifying with, this other group. The former he calls "the identification group" and the latter the "valuation group." Most Maori graduates use the macro-culture as their reference group of valuation but the micro-culture as their reference group of identification. In other words, the source of their cultural (not always social) identity rests firmly in their associations (symbolic or real) with the Maori subculture. This process, as one might expect, often leads to conflicting loyalties, e.g., aspirations may be at the national level whereas expectations remain subcultural. Education in a bicultural (or multicultural) society places a heavy demand on the individual to become proficient in several contexts. We have labelled such contradictions in cultural loyalties the "grass-roots conflict," since Maoris often fear that too much devotion to European cultural patterns will estrange them from the folks back home, i.e., the Maoris at "the grass roots." In fact, in order to strengthen

ingroup ties, even at the expense of the outgroup, Maori graduates sometimes exercise toward Europeans what Berreman (1964) calls "reference group alienation," although usually mildly, in the form of gross stereotypes about Pakehas. Maori graduates, then, are not free from potential prejudices, though their stereotypong is based on different premises from that of Europeans regarding the Maori.[9] Such a situation, nonetheless, is not so much "racial" as it is cultural or social in origin.

Group Self-Image: Social and Cultural Identity

Identity is a universal psycho-social mechanism for adaptation in face of change (Erikson 1964). Cultural identity has relevance only in a situation of cultural heterogeneity, and this is the setting for identity in New Zealand. Maoris believe there is something culturally different about themselves that distinguishes them from European New Zealanders. This distinctiveness they call "Maoritanga," or "Maoriness."

Identity in its broadest sense helps to establish what and where a person is in social terms, i.e., "when one has identity, one is situated"; hence, identity is always to some extent situational (Strauss 1962:63-64). In a bicultural society such as New Zealand,[10] Maoris may be situated in two separate spheres, the macro- and micro-cultural levels. They may, then, use a dissimilar perspective depending on the particular audience for which they are performing. Certainly identity does not connote a closed, inner system imperious to change. Nevertheless, it is too mechanical to conceive of identity as a light-switch mechanism that can be turned off or on to suit the appropriate situation, or one identity being substituted or replaced by another depending on immediate rewards. Most individuals exercise instead what Becker (1960: 32-40) has called "the principle of commitment," i.e., an overriding loyalty that transcends superficial situational adjustments.

If we assume that people organize their behavior through subjectively defined identifications, and further, if we accept the multi-dimensional nature of the social structure, we might well distinguish between social and cultural identities.

Social identity has been defined as the general process by which an individual learns certain roles expected of him in specific social situations (Brim 1960:144; Goodenough 1965:1-24). Being concerned with individual adjustment to specific social contexts, it is by circumstance situational. However, it is important to distinguish between identities of individuals in situations of interaction and identity at a group level. Maoris often adjust to the general culture in terms of situationally specific identities (role directives) but, at the same time, retain a sense of being Maori in cultural terms. Hence, social identities may be thought of as producing change in the individual, whereas cultural identity most often acts to stabilize behavior; it is a conservative mechanism for adaptation in face of change.

In short, a Maori may assume any number of social identities without assuming a corresponding cultural identity and, we suspect, vice versa. We feel that this distinction is essential because the source of Maori identity seems to be primarily cultural rather than social, and the major cleavage between Maori and Pakeha is cultural rather than social in origin.

In fact, there are no doubt several separate dimensions to the identification process, each subject to change depending on the changes in the life situation. Maoris may hold a number of identies concurrently, i.e., they may have multiple identities; and different identities may be said to enjoy different values, hence, to have different functions.

If we break Maori identity down into its most obvious analytical components,[11] we must consider the following dimensions:

1) the biological

2) the social

3) the cultural

4) the personal

With Maoris the biological dimension ("race consciousness") is sometimes alluded to, but real evidence for a group identity based solely, or even fundamentally, on the fact of color is hard to find. Clearly, to be "Maori" is primarily a cultural classification, not a "racial" one (See footnote 9).

The concept of "race" (genetic identity) is almost totally alien to modern New Zealand society. The egalitarian emphasis in New Zealand makes even a residual racism highly suspect. In fact, we found practically no evidence for a firm racial identity among Maori graduates (Contrast the Blacks in the U.S.). Nevertheless, if the Government persists in its present policy of cultural assimilation, i.e., the gradual eradication of the Maori subculture, it may yet precipitate the very racial problem it has tried to avoid. We are suggesting that a process of "forced acculturation" may lead to an over-exaggeration of biological (racial) symbols as a source of one's identity, to compensate for the loss of cultural symbols (Fitzgerald 1968b:143).

In New Zealand, cultural and social interaction often take place on different levels. Hence, we may conclude that the cultural component of the identification process does not always overlap with the social. With the recent upsurge in urban migration, for example, social class factors are assuming prominence in defining lines of social demarcation in New Zealand. To this extent, one may expect group identifications to increasingly reflect - in addition to culture and race - social stratification based on education, occupation, wealth, and prestige. This factor is especially evident among Maori University graduates.

Obviously, then, the cultural component is the most significant in the New Zealand context (We do not actually consider personal identity). We feel

that modern Maoris (and graduates) basically appeal to the historically rooted subculture for their sense of being a Maori, regardless of their manifest behaviors in other contexts or of their knowledge of history. The micro-culture is, after all, a twentieth-century phenomenon, not a relic of the past. In questionnaire responses, projective "tests," and intensive interviews, the conclusion was the same: the strongest sense of group solidarity (and source of identification) is found in this loyalty to the micro-culture rather than to the general culture.

This existential sense of belonging to a shared past and a shared future is based on an ascribed rather than an achieved identity. For, ultimately, one is a Maori by virtue of his kin ties, real or fictive, regardless of his manifest behavior.

This identity, in fact, need not even be rooted in a culturally manifest reality. People often do act on the strength of symbolic identifications alone, i.e., in the absence of any concrete group affiliations (Ritchie 1969:120). It is entertainable that, as the culture becomes less and less manifest, the latent identity will remain strong with or without overt cultural participation. One could then properly, though paradoxically, speak of having a cultural identity without a culture. However, our results show a high degree of overt, manifest subcultural participation on the part of the Maori University graduate. Rather than being assimilated, he has become truly bicultural (Fitzgerald 1968b).

In short, a Maori who wishes to validate his identity can do so on several counts: as belonging to a separate "race"; on the basis of social class characteristics, e.g., shared rural poverty; or, as is most often the case, by appealing to membership in an historically rooted, psychologically satisfying subculture. Rather than losing their identities as Maoris, the graduates have added a new dimension of complexity to the existing pattern of cultural heterogeneity in New Zealand society. For example, Maori graduates often

evince a kind of "backward acculturation" and, in some cases, an almost super-tribalism. When cut off from a kin-based community, e.g., in urban settings, the graduates usually express their "Maoriness" as a pan-Maori phenomenon. A pan-Maori identity is just another validation of the belongingness theme so characteristic of the micro-cultural sphere; it is certainly an emerging stage in the acculturative process.

These analytical distinctions (biological, social, cultural), though not meant to be absolute entities, nevertheless help us to avoid overly simplistic models of change and adaptation.

Policy Results of Model 2

Since the situational model described above has not yet been actively considered in New Zealand, it is impossible to speak of its policy results. However, we can summarize the major theoretical conclusions of this model as suggestions for future policy directions.

It is a fairly common assumption in New Zealand that acculturation is a simple, one-way process of "Europeanization," hence, Maori University graduates - being maximally acculturated - are supposed to be, in effect, "brown-skinned Pakehas" lacking any cultural distinctiveness. Such an assumption naturally leads to cultural assimilation as a policy alternative.

We have questioned such a simplistic view of acculturation and instead utilize a model which places emphasis on social life as "in process" rather than "in equilibrium." Process and equilibrium are not, of course, mutually exclusive, and newer perspectives usually do not replace older ones so much as refine and augment traditional conceptions. However, our model focuses on "relations," with concentration on process rather than closed, statis systems, i.e., emphasis is on events, roles, and so on, as opposed to structure per se. This shift in focus goes hand in hand with the recent change from so-called

"tight" models of society to much "looser" ideas of a social system and its organization (Mayer 1966).

In summary, we found that a society cannot be defined merely in cultural terms, e.g., by observing presence or absence of culture traits, but must be analyzed in terms of complex social actions or the interaction of social roles. Our model, then, emphasized role-playing and role-taking as processes of social interaction rather than "an extension of normative or cultural deterministic theory" (Buckley 1967:146).

Acculturation, thus viewed, is part of a total system of social action; and culture, in this model, is treated as one important component in this total structure, without being considered the system itself. Thus, by utilizing a different model of society and change, we hope to have avoided possible reification of the concepts of culture and acculturation.

Thomas K. Fitzgerald
Greensboro, N. C.
January, 1971

FOOTNOTES

1. Exceptions include Joan Metge (1964), John Harré (1965), and Ralph Piddington (1968). None of these authors has dealt directly with acculturation and idendity, but all have been concerned with culture change.
2. Primarily these researchers directly concerned with the Rakau Maori Studies, namely: Ernest and Pearl Beaglehole (1946), James Ritchie (1956) and his students: Mulligan (1957), Ritchie (1957), Earle (1958), and Williams (1960).
3. Model 1: Spindler's (1955:118) Reservation-Acculturation Model

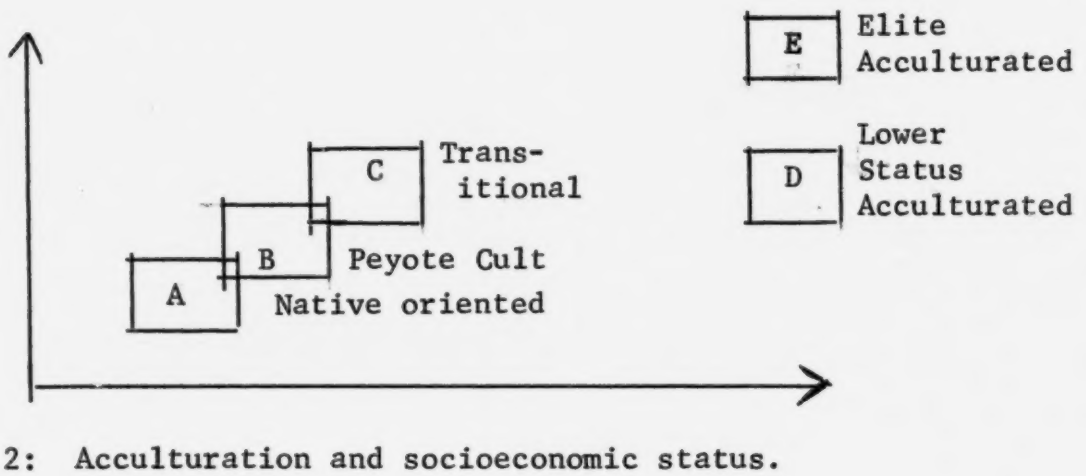


Fig. 2: Acculturation and socioeconomic status.

4. Models developed in foreign settings may not be applicable in New Zealand. For example, Spindler's reservation-acculturation model may be inappropriate for the Maori cultural situation, since, for one thing, the choice factor is so much more evident in New Zealand, where there have never been any reservations.
5. For an example of the confusion of the concepts of "acculturation" and "assimilation," see David P. Ausubel's "The Maori: A Study in Resistive Acculturation" (1961a).
6. Compare David Ausubel's Maori Youth (1961b). Considering that Ausubel is analyzing "aspirations" in only one context, i.e, the European-dominated

school setting, it is not too surprising that he finds a similarity in aspirational levels between Maori and European boys. What would be equally as challenging would be to look at Maori aspirations outside the school setting!

7. John Harré (1965) has advanced a similar hypothesis, but he was not concerned with acculturation and identity.
8. Cf. Ralph Linton (1936) for the original concept of "latent role."
9. The Archers (1970) find some "racial" stereotyping among Pakeha New Zealanders. However, "stereotyping" alone is not, as they imply, the same as being "prejudiced" or "discriminating" against someone on the basis of biological characteristics. Without the assumption of biological inferiority, even discriminations do not constitute "racism." Our study reveals that Maori graduates hold about as gross stereotyping of Europeans as Europeans hold concerning "the Maori," even in cases where Maoris are married to Europeans. However, we suspect this stereotyping is a function of "reference group alienation," i.e., strengthening ingroup ties at the expense of the "other" group.
10. Actually New Zealand is multi-cultural. But, since the other minorities are so small, we can afford to speak of New Zealand as being, essentially, bicultural (Conference on Immigration: 1968).
11. We are following the basic analytical scheme that Van den Berghe uses in his treatment of race (1967).

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